

# ENUMERATING NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE SERVICE ON GALLIPOLI

## Interim Report for the Working Group, March 2016

### Executive Summary

1. Since 1919 it has been authoritatively claimed that 8,556 personnel of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) served at Gallipoli in 1915. This has been challenged in recent years and a cross-agency working group was established in November 2015 to attempt to produce as definitive a number as possible. The approach taken was to confirm the number of NZEF personnel who took part in the initial landing, and then identify the number of reinforcements subsequently landed, less returning sick and wounded.
2. It was established through the analysis of previously identified material that when an allowance is made for those who remained in Egypt nearly 11,000 NZEF personnel served on the Peninsula in April-May 1915. This included the Main Body which departed New Zealand in October 1914 and the first three of six reinforcement groups.
3. The working group also reviewed a large amount of archival material and located hand-written notebooks compiled by a staff officer on the Headquarters of the New Zealand and Australian (NZ & A) Division. The notebooks record the arrivals of reinforcements to the NZ & A Division on Gallipoli between 2 June 1915 and 28 August 1915. Reinforcements numbered 4332 in this period which quickly demonstrate the 8,556 total significantly understates New Zealand numbers on Gallipoli.
4. Additionally 2,429 individual military service files of members of the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements which arrived in the Middle East after 28 August 1915 were examined. This identified that a minimum of 1860 of these personnel saw service on the Peninsula in the final stages of the campaign. It is probable that a significant number of the others also served on Gallipoli but the information on their military service files is inconclusive.
5. From the analysis above, it is shown that the commonly used total of 8556 is incorrect and the approximate number of NZEF troops that served at Gallipoli is definitely more than 16,000 and probably exceeds 17,000.

#### Estimate of total number of NZEF personnel who served at Gallipoli

Contingent	Date of Landing	Approximate Total
Main Body + 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements (Infantry and Mounted Rifles only)	April-May (incl.) 1915	9768 - 10% = 8791
Main Body + 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements (other troops landed at Gallipoli)	April-May (incl.) 1915	2294 - 10% = 2065
DAAG's reports of new Reinforcements joining the major NZ force components at Gallipoli (including Maori Contingent)	June-August (incl.) 1915	4332 (+)
6 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements	October 1915	1860 (+)
<b>Total</b>		<b>17048 (+)</b>

## Introduction

6. Since 1919 it has been authoritatively claimed that 8556 personnel of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) served at Gallipoli in 1915. This figure first appeared in General Sir Ian Hamilton's preface 'The New Zealanders of Anzac' to Major Fred Waite's demi-official history, *The New Zealanders at Gallipoli*, which was published in 1919. This figure was not challenged at the time.

7. The accuracy of the 8556 total, however, was challenged by Richard Stowers in his detailed account of New Zealand's role in the campaign, *Bloody Gallipoli: the New Zealanders' Story*, which was published in 2005. Based on the sources available to him, which did not include the digital copies of NZEF military service files made by Archives New Zealand, Stowers estimated that a total of 13,977 members of the NZEF served at Gallipoli.<sup>1</sup> Further research by David Green, an historian at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH), supported an estimate somewhere between 13,000 and 14,000.

8. Despite these revised estimates, 8,556 has remained the total in widespread use. Both The Great War Exhibition in the former Dominion Museum Building and the "Gallipoli: The Scale Of Our War" exhibition in Te Papa in Wellington use this figure. If it was correct it would show New Zealand having a 93% casualty rate, considerably more than the proportion of the other Allied combatants.

9. Critical to determining the number of New Zealanders who served on Gallipoli is obtaining an accurate picture of the number of wounded and sick who returned to the battlefield after being evacuated, and the number of new NZEF reinforcements who landed on Gallipoli. The 8,556 figure can only be valid if very few of the 11,000 plus NZEF reinforcements arriving in Egypt were sent to Gallipoli during the course of a campaign in which the NZEF was suffering heavy losses. Additionally, given the chaotic situation in the early stages of the campaign, it seems unlikely that such an accurate figure could have been determined.

10. The digitisation of NZEF military service files and some unit war diaries by Archives New Zealand, together with the National Library's Papers Past digital archive of old New Zealand newspapers, provided the opportunity to obtain a more definitive estimate of the numbers of New Zealanders who served at Gallipoli.

## Gallipoli Numbers Working Group

11. The centenary of the Gallipoli Campaign in 2015 led to an increased interest in all questions relating to the campaign and, in particular, how many New Zealanders served on Gallipoli. This led to the establishment in late 2015 of an inter-departmental working group to examine existing evidence relating to the number of NZEF personnel who served in the campaign and to carry out research in an effort to produce as definitive a total as practicable.

12. The Working Group was chaired by Neill Atkinson, the Chief Historian at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH) and included other historians from MCH and the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) as well as representatives of Archives New

Zealand and Statistics New Zealand. The research was led by John Crawford, Defence Historian, and Matthew Buck, Senior Advisor Heritage NZDF.

## **Methodology**

13. It had been suggested to the Working Group that the only way of reaching a highly accurate total for the number of NZEF personnel who served at Gallipoli would be to examine the military service files of all those who served in the NZEF during 1915. Working Group members with past experience with the files, however, considered that it was likely that in a significant number of cases these files would not provide definitive evidence of whether or not an individual served at Gallipoli.

14. As a way of sampling the military service files of the reinforcement groups, it was agreed that conducting an analysis of the files of each member of the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement would test the hypothesis that an examination of all the military service files would produce a definitive result. The 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements were the last draft of men from New Zealand who could have served at Gallipoli. If the survey proved that a substantial proportion of them did serve in the campaign this in itself would show that the old figure was substantially incorrect.

15. At the same time as work was going on with the survey of the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, the NZDF Historian, John Crawford, carried out a review of the other material at Archives New Zealand in Wellington relating to the reinforcement of the NZEF during 1914-1915.

## **Where did the 8,556 figure come from?**

16. Although the 8,556 total has often been described as official or authoritative, this figure is only mentioned in Hamilton's preface to Waite's book. Waite, himself does not use this total anywhere in his book. He does, however, include a table showing the full strengths of the Main Body of the NZEF (7,761), additional units formed in New Zealand during the campaign (1,458), and additional NZEF units formed in Egypt during the campaign (795). This totals 10,014. Crucially, Waite also notes that these totals did not include reinforcements.

17. MCH historian David Green noticed that the total of the establishment of the Main Body and that of the additional units formed in Egypt during the campaign is 8556. That the total for these two figures should exactly match the number of New Zealanders said by Hamilton to have served at Gallipoli is extraordinarily unlikely. Green concluded that in all probability the figure of 8,556 for the number of New Zealanders who served at Gallipoli was produced by Hamilton simply adding together the strengths of the Main Body and the additional NZEF units raised in Egypt in 1915.

## **Reinforcing the NZEF 1914-1915**

18. Archives New Zealand holds a substantial number of official records relating to the original deployment and reinforcement of the NZEF during 1914 and 1915. Many important papers, however, especially from the period of the Gallipoli campaign, have not survived. For example, the embarkation return and

disembarkation order for only one group of NZEF reinforcements dispatched from Alexandria to Gallipoli has been located, even though such a report was almost certainly completed for each group of reinforcements.<sup>2</sup> Conditions at Gallipoli, especially during the early days of the campaign, made the compilation of accurate personnel records very difficult.<sup>3</sup>

19. New Zealand's detailed pre-war planning for an expeditionary force of about 8,000 men made provision for regular reinforcements. These provisions were put in place when the NZEF was raised in 1914. The Main Body of the NZEF, which sailed in October 1914, was accompanied by the 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcements, equal to 10 percent of its establishment. Two months later a new contingent, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements, equal to 20 percent of the force's strength, was dispatched, and thereafter it was intended to send reinforcements equal to 5 percent of establishment each month.<sup>4</sup> It was recognised from the outset that these reinforcements would "probably be required to replace wastage in the field".<sup>5</sup>

20. By late 1914 it was apparent to the British War Office that casualties among the British forces engaged in the war were much heavier than had been anticipated. As a result, the reinforcement rates for the NZEF were adjusted. At the end of 1914 New Zealand agreed to increase the rate of reinforcements for mounted rifles units to 10 percent and infantry units to 15 percent of establishment each month.<sup>6</sup>

21. The total number of New Zealanders who embarked for service overseas and disembarked in the Middle East in time to take part in the Gallipoli campaign (and were thus potentially available for service on Gallipoli) was as follows:

Reinforcement Contingent	Date of Sailing	Number
Main Body	15/10/1914	7761
1 <sup>st</sup> Reinforcements	15/10/1914	738
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements	14/12/1914	1974
3 <sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements (Incl. 1 <sup>st</sup> Māori Contingent)	14/02/1915	2230
British Section NZEF	Embarked from UK	240
4 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements	17/04/1915	2261
5 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements	13/06/1915	2411
6 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements	14/08/1915	2364
Additional Reinforcements	21/05/1915-19/07/1915	196
6 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcement Details (incl. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Māori Contingent)	19/09/1915	420
<b>Total</b>		<b>20595</b>

Source: *NZEF. It's Provision and Maintenance (1919)*

### Archival Research WA 23/3 HQ NZ & A Division – Assistant Adjutant General (AAG) Unregistered Files

22. In his archival research at Archives New Zealand, John Crawford located hand-written notebooks compiled by the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General (DAAG) of the NZ & A Division. The DAAG was 15/7 Captain (later Major) N.W.B.B. Thoms of the New Zealand Staff Corps. The DAAG was a senior personnel staff officer who was responsible for maintaining strength states for the NZ & A Division including arrivals, departures and casualties.

23. The notebooks record the arrivals of reinforcements to the NZ & A Division on Gallipoli between 2 June 1915 and 28 August 1915. The notebooks distinguish between returning sick and wounded rejoining the Division from hospital, those rejoining the division after temporary service elsewhere, and newly joined reinforcement drafts. In only a small number of cases (<4%) is the category of reinforcement recorded in the notebook unclear.

24. A survey of the three notebooks produced the following breakdown of reinforcement categories over the recording period:

Unit	Hosp. Return	Other Return	Reinforcement	Unclear	Grand Total
Auckland Infantry Battalion (IB)	224	14	605	7	850
Canterbury IB	232	750	562	52	1596
Otago IB	193	4	567	44	808
Wellington IB	196	24	590	32	842
Auckland Mounted Rifles (MR)	68	5	233	8	314
Canterbury MR	68	0	170	9	247
Otago MR	45	2	163	3	213
Wellington MR	60	0	232	5	297
NZ Medical Corps	31	5	87	4	127
NZ Māori	13	0	484	0	497
NZ Field Artillery	43	99	293	86	521
NZ Engineers	63	0	302	16	381
HQ NZ Infantry Brigade	33	0	0	0	33
HQ NZ MR Brigade	14	0	3	0	17
NZ Chaplains	3	1	1	0	5
NZ staff NZ&A Div	10	4	5	0	19
NZ Signals	8	2	35	1	46
NZ Army Service Corps	7	0	0	1	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1311</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>4332</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>6821</b>

25. The results indicate that of the 6,821 arrivals of all kinds received by the main New Zealand Expeditionary Force components of the Division, 4,332 (63%) were supplied by new reinforcement drafts. A further 1,311 arrivals (19%) were personnel returning from hospital.

26. The "Other Return" arrivals were troops of the Division temporarily detailed for other tasks beyond divisional control who subsequently returned to the Division. They are not, therefore, new personnel and cannot be added to the total of new reinforcements received by the Division over the course of the campaign. The largest single group of this category was the 750 officers and men of the Canterbury Infantry Battalion who were sent for a temporary rest at Lemnos in early July 1915.

27. In total 2,324 of the new reinforcements (54% of the new reinforcement total) were received by the battalions of New Zealand Infantry Brigade. 2,098 of these reinforcements were received in two drafts which arrived on the peninsula on

8/9 June 1915 and 7/8 August 1915 respectively. An examination of the military service files of the officers who landed with each draft, in addition to a survey of the published regimental histories and unpublished war diaries of these battalions, established that these two drafts were composed of officers and men of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements respectively.

28. In total 798 new reinforcements were received by the New Zealand Mounted Rifles regiments. The majority of these reinforcements were received in four drafts on 1 July 1915, and the 9, 16 and 23 August 1915.

29. The majority of the NZ Engineer new reinforcements (219) were received on 4 June 1915. Subsequent reinforcement drafts of 15, 20 and 48 were received on the 5, 9 and 16 August 1915.

30. The New Zealand Field Artillery received new reinforcement drafts of 58, 48, 26 and 158 (290 out of 293) on 14 June, 8 July, and 5 and 9 August 1915 respectively.

31. The Māori Contingent arrived as a single reinforcement of 479 on 3 July 1915 and received only another five new reinforcements over the reporting period.

32. It may be concluded that at least 4,332 new reinforcements joined the main New Zealand Expeditionary Force components of the New Zealand and Australian Division on Gallipoli between June and August 1915 (inclusive). This number may be regarded as a minimum as additional reinforcements are certain to have joined the other minor New Zealand components of the Division, such as the New Zealand companies of the Divisional Train.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements Survey**

33. The methodology for the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements Survey was developed by Matthew Buck.

34. A list of 2,464 personnel recorded as having embarked from New Zealand with the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements in 1915 was obtained from the Auckland War Memorial Museum Cenotaph Database (Cenotaph List). The names on the Cenotaph List were derived from the embarkation roll of 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements personnel who left New Zealand.

35. After a comparison of the 2,464 names on the Cenotaph List and the digitised military service files:

- a. 2,429 individuals were confirmed as having sailed as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements;
- b. 19 individuals either could not be confirmed to be part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements or were shown to have sailed with other reinforcements; and
- c. 16 military service files could not be located.

36. The following analysis refers only to the 2,429 individuals who could be confirmed as having sailed with the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements. It should be noted that this number is less than the 2784 reported to have sailed with the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements and 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement Details in a report given to the House of Representatives in 1919.<sup>7</sup>

37. The 2,429 individuals confirmed to have sailed with the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements were classified according to the following categories :

Category	Definition
1	Served on Gallipoli. File explicitly refers to service on Gallipoli/Anzac/Dardanelles.
2	Did not serve at Gallipoli. File provides explicit evidence of service elsewhere than on the Gallipoli peninsula throughout the entire length of the campaign.
3	Uncertain. No direct or indirect indications of service on either Gallipoli or elsewhere could be found.
4	Joined unit at Lemnos. This can be taken for a positive indication of service on Gallipoli where an individual joined a unit known to have subsequently served at Gallipoli

38. The results of the survey were:

Category	Number	Percentage of Total	Remarks
1 (Gallipoli Service)	1285	53%	
2 (No Gallipoli Service)	102	4%	
3 (Uncertain)	457	19%	
4 (Joined Unit)	585	24%	

39. Further analysis of the results concluded that:

- a. of the 585 Category 4 (Joined Unit) determinations, 575 served with either an infantry or mounted rifles unit, strongly indicating Gallipoli service. The remaining 10 served in either the NZ Field Artillery (4) or NZ Medical Corps (6);
- b. of the 457 Category 3 (Uncertain) determinations, 336 served with either an infantry or mounted rifles unit; and
- c. of the 1,962 for whom there is reasonable certainty about their service (all of Category 1; 575 of Category 4 known to have joined their infantry and mounted rifles units; and 102 of Category 2, who did not serve), the percentage who served or very probably served is 95%  $((1285 + 575) \times 100/1962)$ .

40. The conclusion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements survey is that of the 2,429 surveyed, 1860 (or 76% of the total sample) may reasonably be regarded as having served at Gallipoli. This total may be regarded as a minimum as it is very likely that additional 6th Reinforcement personnel also served on the Peninsula.

## Conclusions

41. It is evident that not all those who embarked from New Zealand as part of the Main Body and first six reinforcement drafts will have served on Gallipoli. This is because of wastage within each group (death, injury, illness, discipline, and/or

returned to NZ) before disembarkation on Gallipoli and because not all the personnel who embarked from New Zealand were front-line troops. Camps and facilities in Egypt needed to be staffed and the horses of the Mounted Rifles needed to be cared for while the Mounted Rifles were fighting as infantry on the Peninsula without their animals.

42. From the analysis above, it is concluded that the approximate number of NZEF troops that are likely to have served at Gallipoli is:

**Estimate of Total Number of NZEF Personnel Who Served at Gallipoli**

Contingent	Date of Landing	Approximate Total
Main Body + 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements (Infantry and Mounted Rifles only) [Note a.]	April-May (incl.) 1915	9768 - 10% = 8791
Main Body + 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements (other troops landed at Gallipoli) [Note a.]	April-May (incl.) 1915	2294 - 10% = 2065
DAAG's reports of new Reinforcements joining the major NZ force components at Gallipoli (including Maori Contingent) [Note b.]	June-August (incl.) 1915	4332 (+)
6 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements	October 1915	1860 (+)
<b>Total</b>		<b>17048 (+)</b>

Sources: NZEF. *It's Provision and Maintenance*, Table X, p.18; WA 23/3, DAAG reports; 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements Survey.

**Table Notes:**

a. 10% has been deducted from the figures for Infantry, Mounted Rifles and other troops recorded as having embarked from New Zealand in the first three Reinforcement drafts to take account of the wastage from disease and other causes among these drafts before disembarkation at Gallipoli. Other sources confirm that these wastage rates were typically  $\leq 10\%$ .

b. The Māori Contingent, although sailing with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements, did not land on the Peninsula until July 1915 and was thus recorded in the DAAG's reports.

43. Although this total is far more accurate (probably within plus/minus five percent) than previous estimates of the number of NZEF personnel who served at Gallipoli, there remains a lack of precision because of:

a. the lack of precise statistics for the number of troops from the Main Body and 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements who landed at Gallipoli; and

b. the uncertainties (in the region of 20%) in the totals for Gallipoli service that can be derived from military service files alone.

**Next Steps**

44. While the composition of a complete nominal roll of NZEF members who served on Gallipoli may be aspirational, further research will provide greater



specificity around the numbers. The next step is a more detailed study of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements and further research on the 457 members of the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements whose service files are unclear as to service on Gallipoli.



John Crawford



Matthew Buck

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<sup>1</sup> Stowers, *Bloody Gallipoli*, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> 'Esson, 'Embarkation Return of Detachments', for a group of reinforcements sailing on 2 May 1915, no date (nd) but 2 May 1915, Esson 'Disembarkation Orders', 6 May 1915, WA23/1 [box 1] – check reference, ANZ

<sup>3</sup> See for example, New Zealand Infantry Brigade War Diary, 16 May 1915, WA70/94 [70f], ANZ.

<sup>4</sup> "New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 1914, Composition", AD1, 23/60, ANZ; Robin to Allen, 12 December 1914, AD10, 16/12, ANZ.

<sup>5</sup> Godley to Allen, 4 September 1914, AD10 16/12, ANZ.

<sup>6</sup> "History of Scale of Reinforcements" enclosure to Robin to Allen, 28 July 1917, Allen1, D1/6/5, ANZ; Branch of the Chief of General Staff, *War, 1914-1918: New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Its Provision and Maintenance* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1919), 6.

<sup>7</sup> Branch of the Chief of General Staff, *War, 1914-1918: New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Its Provision and Maintenance* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1919).